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December 2012

Writing 1320-11237, T, TH; 10:50

Research Paper

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Children without Fathers

There are many children who grow up without their father in their life. This can create a very big problem in a child's life. Not only will a child not know what it may be like to have a male role model around the house, they may also feel as if they have been neglected. Although many believe that a child will sustain a normal lifestyle growing up without a father, there is much evidence that shows a child without growing up without a father life will differ from a child who has their father as a part of his or her life. Without a father, a child may become sexually active at an early age, feel neglected by their father, step up to play the lead of their father, become confused about his or her gender roles in life, may drop out of school, and see his or her mother as their male and female role model in his or her life. There are many reasons why a child's father might not be a part of their child's life. Some of these reasons are gay fathers and mothers, incarcerated fathers, fathers just not caring, and feeling that child support is enough for the child.

Fathers should feel responsible for providing some type of financial support for their children whether they are married to the mother of the child or not. In her article, Absent Fathers, Rebecca Blank agrees with this by saying, “whether divorced or married, fathers should bear their share of the financial responsibility for raising their children” (Blank 441).

Raising a child is not easy for a mother to do all on her own, so all the possible help from a father would be a good benefit to her. If a father does not want to contribute with helping raise a child financially, a lot of times the mother may put the father on child support. There are a small percentage of mothers that put a child's father on child support today. Blank agrees, she says, “the level of child support collected among single women in this country is extremely low” (441). In a lot of situations, the child's father may not have a job or they just do not want to pay child support, which could cause them to spend some time in jail. Daniel Young also agrees with this he says, “If a child's father isn't going to help out, then a court order should be in place” (488).

Another cause for a child's father not to be around is if the child's father or mother is gay. Robert Barret says, “Children of gay fathers are like children from all families” (410). If child's father is gay that would make the child go through his or her life wandering if he or she is or is not gay. A child of a gay father may go through their life embarrassed, threatened, confused, or unhappy. Some gay fathers will just continue to go on with their lives as if everything is okay, but other gay fathers will try to keep this a secret from the rest of the world so that they will not lose custody of their child.

In agreement Barret says, “Many gay fathers see no choice other than to continue living relatively closeted lives. Others, fearing the damage that exposure may bring their children and/or possible custody battles involving their homosexuality, live rigidly controlled lives and may never develop a gay identity” (411). Fiona MacCallum says, “Children who are raised by lesbian mothers at birth, may also grow up with the mindset that they too must grow up to be attracted to the same sex” (412). A child who has been raised all his or her life may feel that they are supposed to grow up to be attracted to his or her same sex.

The third cause is a child's father not wanting to be around. This can lead to a big problem. Seeing that a child's father does not want to be around the child can make the child feel neglected. This can also make the child feel as if no one cares about him or her. Another cause would be children becoming sexually active at a younger age due to their father not being around.

Jane Mendle agrees, she says “without a male role model around, children may begin to have sex as early as the age of fourteen” (21). Today more young teens are becoming pregnant and sexually active due to a lack of fatherhood.

Another cause from fathers not wanting to be around is a young male may feel that it’s their job to step up and take their fathers place. This could lead to stress problems. This could also lead to young males dropping out of school to get a job to help out their mothers around the house. In some cases due to not having a father around children will sometimes get their mother a Father's Day gift just to show her how much he or she appreciates her.

The fourth reason that children may not have their father in their life is due to incarceration. When a father becomes incarcerated, it may lead to very big problems in their child's life. Nicholas Davidson believes growing up without a father could be good for some kids, because he feels that fathers can be over protective which may cause a child to miss out on certain activities and opportunities in his or her life (49).

Carl Mazza disagrees; he believes a child needs his or her father in their life to provide discipline and guidance (523). For a father not to be in his child's life, may cause the child to feel neglected. In many cases this can cause young males to feel as if it is their job to step up and take the role of their father. The young man may feel that it is his duty to get a part time or even a full time job to help his mother pay bills or help afford other things around the household. When a child's father is incarcerated the child may become distracted from their school work, or the child may even drop out of school due to the stress of their father not being around. In many cases when a child's father is incarcerated, the child may spend more of the time mad than happy. The child may take a lot of his or her anger out on the other children at school, his or her siblings, mother and/or step father, and any other person that is a part of the child's life. Young men may grow up not caring what happens to them later in their lives. They may feel that since their father is incarcerated then it should not matter if they are in prison later in their life.

Not knowing what their fathers go through, the young men may think that their father does not care about what is going on with their family back at home. Mazza says, “No matter what activities incarcerated men participate in, what organizations they join, or goals they set for themselves, each and every night is exactly the same. Every night they are locked into cells, often in single man cells, lie on their beds and think about their lives. They think about their past and the things they did and never did. They begin to think about their past motivations for their behaviors. They think about how they felt as boys and young men. They think about their present. They think about the state of their lives, their families, and their abilities to survive in this prison environment” (4).

Children without a father in his or her life may go through a lot. Even though many believe children without a father in his or her lives are just as normal as any other child's, there not. Having to walk around with a pretend smile on his or her face may not always be as easy as it sounds. These children often suffer from stress disorders, feelings of being neglected, and much more. From gay fathers and mothers, incarcerated fathers, fathers just not caring, and feeling that child support is enough for the child, all leaves an impact on these children lives.

So having a child become sexually active at an early age, feel neglected by their father, step up to play the lead of their father, become confused about his or her gender roles in life, may drop out of school, and see his or her mother as their male and female role model in his or her life, one would think fathers would step up and be a part of their child’s life. Although many may feel that a child should be alright without his or her father in his or her life, evidence proves that these children may go through a lot in life and may not live the same lifestyle as a child who has his or her father in his or her life.

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